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## The Crisis of Governance in Pakistan: A Critical Analysis of Benazir Bhutto Government (1988-1990).

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### Abstract

*Democratic governance empowers and provides citizens the opportunity to live a life of their free will. Unfortunately, Pakistan's democracy is confronted with numerous challenges. Among these challenges, governance issues are worthy of attention. The paper especially focuses on PPP's first tenure under Benazir Bhutto in terms of its commitment to democratic governance. It was expected that the norms of democracy would be strengthened, and the country would never see dictatorial rule again in any manifestation. This paper examines PPP's style of governance keeping in view its fragile position in the parliament and the all-over hostile working environment in the country in 1988-90. Centre-provincial relationship; especially Punjab, has also been taken into account. The study explores Benazir's claims and struggles for strengthening democracy. Furthermore, the paper highlights those factors that made the party to fulfil its commitments and to bring the system of good governance in Pakistan.*

**Key Words:** Governance, Democracy, Benazir Bhutto, Government and Opposition.

### Introduction

Democracy is acknowledged as the paramount system of governance and the practices in the developed world make known that the system has proved its worth. Pakistan in the developing world could not, as yet, become a fertile ground for democracy to flourish. Among the leading political parties responsible for this phenomenon, the Pakistan Peoples Party is an outstanding example which, despite making tall promises for democracy and good governance, could not do as was expected. Therefore, assessing the role of PPP in promoting democracy in Pakistan or otherwise, is of vital importance. The paper focuses on the general mindset of party leadership in the context of their commitment to the democratic governance in Pakistan. The contributions of the party are analysed in the paper when it was passing through a crucial juncture under its first female premiership. This premiership provided an opportunity to benefit the party in multi-dimensions; to rectify all those mistakes committed previously, to improve its public posture, to strengthen the vote bank in the prevailed circumstances and to accelerate democratic culture in the national politics. But the opportunity was lost in the sense that the party's style of politics excluded the principles of maturity, decency and tolerance which are vital for a smooth governance. Therefore, no positive change could be seen in its politics as a ruling party in Parliament. As was expected that the party would promote the culture of decency, respect and tolerance towards political opponents despite the adverse situations that confronted it.

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## General Elections 1988 and Pakistan Politics

After the death of General Ziaul Haq, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were the two main political rivals in Pakistan who were carrying two different ideologies. The former used the legacy of her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto while the latter had the trump-card of his military mentor General Zia ul Haq in the elections. However, on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1988, the historic decision came from the Supreme Court of Pakistan in response to the petitions filed by Benazir Bhutto on August 1, 1988, against the decision of General Zia that the elections would be held on non-party basis. The Supreme Court gave its verdict and declared that elections would be on party-basis. The Court's decision was highly appreciated and also welcomed the decision of universal franchise enthusiastically all over the country (Oldenburg, 2010). PPP had decided not to make any electoral alliance and decided to contest elections against General Zia's military regime from her own platform. Muslim League became the part of a coalition called 'Islami Jamhoori Ittehad' (IJI) to weaken the position of Benazir Bhutto and to win the elections at any cost (Rais, 1988). Political parties, who had weak public support, planned to contest election and cashed Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) as their electoral alliance. They actually wanted to get more of their members elected to the new National and Provincial assemblies than they could be able to do on their own. The PPP showed generosity in declaring that it would not file nomination papers of its candidates against any of the heads of the political parties in MRD. But the MRD alliance which had functioned as the only opposition to General Zia's regime withered away due to differences in their seat adjustment.

Elections were conducted and PPP came out victorious by securing majority seats in assemblies. Election results show that the party secured 94 seats in National Assembly at its credit without support of any other party. The IJI, the second largest platform got 56 seats in National Assembly. The Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) emerged third party with 13 seats in National Assembly. Therefore, the 1988 elections had produced a split mandate; PPP did not get an absolute majority in the Parliament and the three provinces. Only in Sindh, it secured a sweeping mandate of 67 out of 100 seats as shown in the table (Aziz, 2009).

### Party Position in National Assembly in elections held on November 16, 1988:

S.No	Name of Party	Percentage of Votes	No. of Seats
1	Pakistan Peoples Party	38.5	94
2	Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI)	30.2	56
3	Pakistan Awami Ittehad	4.2	3
4	Awami National Party	2.1	2
5	Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F)	1.8	7
7	Pakistan Democratic Party	0.4	1
8	Balochistan National Alliance	0.3	2
10	Independents	19.5	40
	Total	100	207

Source: The above statistics in the table have been taken from PILDAT.

An additional twenty seats in the National Assembly were reserved for women to be filled after the general election results. With the support of MQM and 8 members from the erstwhile FATA PPP managed a clear majority. Keeping the required majority in the House, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan called upon Benazir Bhutto to form the government. The newly elected government of PPP led by Benazir Bhutto had to face enormous challenges in the coming days because she had coalition partners who would have not been reliable in long run. She faced fierce opposition from the IJI, a coalition assembled by the departing military elites. The year 1988 was, in many ways a watershed year in the turbulent history of Pakistan. This particular year put an end to the long era of military rule in the country. Pakistan witnessed once again democratic wave spreading as the outcome of the 1988 elections. The triumph of Benazir Bhutto in the

election was the beginning of a new democratic era in Pakistan.

Benazir Bhutto was not only the beneficiary of a dynastic politics but also the emotional attachment of the electorates of her charismatic father's family. However, this legacy of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had proved to be a mixed political blessing. The circumstances in which Benazir Bhutto assumed power make it realistic and necessary for her to pursue political ends through negotiation and agreement. Benazir Bhutto as a civilian head of the government had initiated conciliation with all political platforms in the country including IJI's. Moreover, Benazir Bhutto had successfully mediated a conflict of interest between the MQM and the leadership of Sindh. The Awami National Party (ANP) that was on a collision course with Z. A. Bhutto in the mid-1970s, was now PPP's coalition partner in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ex-NWFP). Furthermore, she successfully kept on-board the IJI's Chief Minister, Mr. Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, and his government in Baluchistan.

It was Benazir's vision of conciliatory politics that she supported Ghulam Ishaq Khan in the presidential elections held on December 12, 1988. There was growing realization within the PPP and outside it that confrontation among the democratic forces had only benefited the military bureaucracy in the past. The emergence of more than one centre of power could provide a unique opportunity to Pakistani leadership to set new traditions of political partnership while maintaining separate political identities. Benazir Bhutto and her party could take a leadership role in fostering the politics of conciliation in Pakistan (Khan, 2014).

### **Civil-Military Relations**

The removal of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the incarcerations of both Benazir Bhutto and Nusrat Bhutto during the Gen. Zia period had increased the gulf of mistrust between the military and Benazir Bhutto. This uneasiness in the relationship persisted throughout the government of Benazir Bhutto. She sacked General Hameed Gul, the Chief of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), and planned to diminish military's role in politics. She also had a failed attempt to change Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) Admiral Sirohey but the latter had the backing of both, the military and the President. The military did not like this adventure as General Hameed Gul was appointed by General Zia. Besides these, Benazir Bhutto's government asked the new Chief of ISI, Lt. General Shamsur Rahman Kallu to provide information about the money used by General Hamid Gul to support [the IJI in the 1988](#) elections against PPP. Primarily, the military was not comfortable with the victory of PPP and put enormous resistance in the form of IJI to keep the party out of the corridors of power. Moreover, the President also took a long time in calling upon Benazir Bhutto to form the government.

Benazir Bhutto consented to three major conditions of the military which were their main areas of concern. These included: an assurance for election of Ghulam Ishaq Khan; as President of Pakistan, retention of former Foreign Minister Lt. General Yaqoob Ali Khan in the cabinet and not to reduce the defense budget (Sirohey, 2000). President extracted assurances from Benazir Bhutto not to interfere in senior appointments in the armed forces nor try to change the course of foreign policy in Afghanistan. As mentioned on several occasions in her interviews, she formed government in 1988 with her hands tied and that she was overthrown in 1990 because she chose to dictate her own security agenda. Despite the assurances which Benazir Bhutto gave to the armed forces through Ghulam Ishaq Khan, she could have asserted herself in strengthening the role of democratic institutions but she concentrated on consolidating and expanding the political space of the party (Khan and Ahmad, 2018) The post-Zia military elite was thus able to exercise influence behind the scene by brokering a deal which ensured the unity of anti-PPP political forces under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif. These understandings rested on the assurance that the defense budget was sacrosanct and Army retained a veto in vital foreign policy and security matters. The armed forces were able to enforce this veto through their allies in the bureaucracy led by Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Ziaul Haq's successor in the office of President, whose powers had been appreciably augmented by the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution. She was not always included in important decisions, for example, General Mirza Aslam Baig and the President decided to carry on a nuclear bomb without consulting her.

## **Relations with Opposition Fallouts for Governance**

Having marginal National Assembly seats in 1988 general elections virtually weakened the position of Benazir Bhutto as prime minister. The most populous province Punjab went to the IJI and provinces like Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ex-NWFP) remained with PPP. It was difficult for her to carry on the political administration tactfully with such a low mandate. Despite all these challenges, she took some decisions of vital importance like; choosing her cabinet ministers, kept the portfolios of finance and defense with herself. Furthermore, she kept engaged MQM, a coalition partner, who agreed to support her government both at federal and provincial levels. This willingness was recorded through an agreement signed by the Central leadership of MQM and the Provincial President of PPP in Sindh. It was pledged to protect and safeguard the interests of all the people of Sindh regardless of language, religion, origin of birth and vowed to stamp out violence and to support the rule of law in Pakistan, generally, and in Sindh, particularly. The agreement was a short-lived one as it was an effort to achieve peace and cooperation between the indigenous population and Muhajirs in Sindh province. Since the PPP began to rule and hardly a month had passed, yet strains erupted between the government and opposition and the latter pronounced and tended to increase it. In such situation, when the country had started a democratic journey yet and opposition was supposed to observe great patience and prudence towards the newly elected government but turned into non-democratic. It resulted in a chaotic and dis-trusted political atmosphere in the country.

Just earlier to Benazir's government, the opposition had established friendly relations with governments. Even that major political parties like; Muslim League or Jamaat-i-Islami, and their members achieved the status of ministers in the following days. General Zia's regime had obvious examples of the same mechanism. During Benazir's regime, opposition manifested itself in shape of '*Islami Jamhoori Ittehad*' (IJI). But Benazir could not keep the opposition on board. It was either her fortune of failure or the opposition's un-willingness to support her government. For example, different issues like Balochistan and Centre-Punjab relations had remained throughout the Benazir's government as the focus points of the government and opposition relationship theme. It seemed from their policies and approaches that both government and opposition adopted such mechanisms through which they are dislodging their rival position. Lack of maturity and political impatience covered the political scene completely ([Ahmad, Dawan, January 5, 1989](#)).

Benazir Bhutto's government was successful in passing the annual budget for 1989-1990 from the Parliament. However, in the following months, it was given a tough time by the IJI, the MQM and Awami National Party (ANP) in the National Assembly. The allies of PPP i.e., the MQM and ANP parted ways one after another. As Benazir Bhutto completed her first year in office, the political situation in Pakistan mostly remained unsettled. Government became the epi-centre of criticism in the country especially from opposition. The erosion of the government's strength in the Parliament, after the withdrawal of MQM support, provided an opportunity to the Combined Opposition Parties (COP) to launch a motion of no-confidence against the PPP government (Aziz, 2009). Therefore, in the fall of 1989, Benazir Bhutto and her coalition government faced a no confidence motion in Parliament from an ambitious opposition alliance to overthrow an elected government before its mandated tenure. She showed her willingness to join the opposition benches in case of losing the majority in the National Assembly. The Prime Minister was expecting her defeat in the no confidence move due to her differences with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan. But the Combined Opposition Parties' move was defeated in the Lower House of Parliament. The opposition, however, managed to receive 107 against 119 votes in the House of 237 members ([Doherty & Doherty, 1990](#)). After the attempted Parliamentary coup against her government, she alleged that if her government was defeated by the no-confidence motion, all the opposition leaders had a plan to arrest her and the top 1000 leaders of her party ([Chowdhury, 2003](#)). Operation 'Mid Night Jackals' was conducted by the ISI to earn loyalties of MNAs of ruling PPP ([The Nation, September 30, 1992](#)). Had PPP government been defeated in the no-confidence vote, then President Ghulam Ishaq Khan would have been free to ask

the opposition to form a new government. In the weeks preceding the move, rumours circulated claiming that members of the National Assembly were offered as much as one million dollars to switch sides. The rumours of buying loyalties were substantiated by Assembly members on both sides.

## **Centre Provincial Scrimmage and its Effects on Governance**

The election manifesto of PPP was full of promises to improve the life of the common man by accelerating the pace of investment and growth. Benazir Bhutto started her premiership with great public expectations after being victorious in the 1988 elections but soon people disappointed by her inexperienced leadership. Her administration was plagued by strong and persistent allegations of corruption, political patronage at public expenses, autocratic tendencies and personal animus against political opponents. By supporting PPP coalition governments in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ex-NWFP) weakened her credibility by becoming a partisan Prime Minister ([Arif, The Dawn October 10, 1994](#))

The task taken up by the new PPP elected government was to capture the Punjab government by winning over at least twenty-five members of the IJI government led by Nawaz Sharif. The task could not achieve its target but left long-lasting effect on political and democratic history of Pakistan in the coming years. The atmosphere of mutual suspicion and enmity had so marred the relationship between the Benazir's government and the IJI led opposition that the former took every opportunity to topple the IJI dominated Punjab government whereas the latter left no stone unturned in defaming and discrediting the former. If Benazir had acknowledged the Nawaz's government in Punjab and let him rule in Punjab constitutionally and expected cooperation from him democratically in the centre, she would have confined him up to Punjab and would have also strengthened democracy. But by confronting him, she elevated him from regional politics to national politics and also allowed him to use the Punjab card and stir up Punjabi nationalism.

It was not going to be smooth sailing for the new government as the chief minister of Punjab, Nawaz Sharif, soon began to defy the writ of the centre government in his province. The provincial government in the Punjab even refused to extend an official protocol to the Prime Minister during her visit to the province ([Ziring, 1990](#)). Nevertheless, all the passive strategies of confrontation, retaliation, competition and meanness were adopted in this controversy between the centre and Punjab governments.

Egged on by his ambitions and assisted by several anti-PPP elements within the government and especially from the intelligence community, Nawaz Sharif also spearheaded opposition in the National Assembly. Benazir Bhutto initially enjoyed the goodwill of her supporters and General Aslam Baig, the then Army Chief, who avoided an open confrontation with her. Yet Pakistan was soon to begin a new era of fractured democracy where more energy was wasted on mutual refutations than on resolving the country's age-old problems of governance. Like Nawaz Sharif and his diehard supporters, Benazir did not make any substantial effort to hold extended dialogue with her political opponents.

Duels to put each other down revealed their selfish and amateurish mind-sets while publicly claiming to bring democracy to Pakistan. When the Nawaz Sharif government presented a supplementary budget, PPP members staged a walkout in the Punjab Assembly intending to cause financial problems for the provincial government. Benazir Bhutto also rejected the Punjab government's call for a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) to resolve financial issues between the provinces and the federal government. Nawaz Sharif, too, rejected all federal government initiatives, right or wrong; and created a parallel government of his own, often hostile to the centre. Exploiting provincial feelings, he presented himself as the saviour of the Punjab which, in fact, had been the province dominating the smaller federating units since independence. He created his own Bank of Punjab and a provincial television channel to portray Punjabis as a deprived nationality. He vehemently opposed developmental projects pursued under Benazir Bhutto's Peoples Work Program (PWP) ([Kalia, 2001](#)). PWP empowered PPP workers to implement this program through generous funding from the federal government.

On the other hand, ethnic tensions in Sindh not only damaged law and order but also seriously questioned governance in the province. The MQM had harboured longstanding reservations about Benazir Bhutto because of the quota system and the latter being more entrenched among the rural population in Sindh. But the MQM's leader, Altaf Hussain and his group of firebrands were not comfortable with the Pashtun, Punjabi and Baloch communities in Karachi, because other than changing demography, housing, jobs, transport and local political power appeared to be slipping away from the erstwhile well-ensconced Muhajireen. Basing its case on Muhajir victimization, MQM ran its own militias and fought running battles in the growingly segregated areas in Karachi, which seriously affected Pakistani economy and morale. While seeking support from the MQM which held 13 National Assembly seats (11 from Karachi and 2 from Hyderabad), Benazir Bhutto tried to assuage MQM's apprehensions about her government. The MQM was reluctant to enter a coalition following heightened tensions with the Sindhi nationalists, as the situation worsened after a bombing on their election campaign in Hyderabad on September 30, 1988 that claimed 200 lives ([The Dawn, October 2, 1988](#)).

As a result of the public outcry in Urban-Sindh, however, both parties gradually grew closer. A 58 points agreement was signed in December 1988 in Karachi between Benazir Bhutto and Altaf Hussain. The agreement angered several Sindhi nationalists. Although, given the lack of trust between the two parties, there was very little hope for its successful implementation. The IJI led by Nawaz Sharif also began to woo Altaf Hussain, a move mainly intended to destabilize the government of Benazir Bhutto ([Malik, 2008](#)). In the meantime, Karachi still suffered from intermittent cases of kidnaps, mysterious killings, and occasional ethnic clashes, which only fuelled the IJI criticism of the PPP administration. Just as significant, Benazir Bhutto was unable to parlay the electoral success of the PPP coalition and her own popularity into creating a cohesive domestic policy for Pakistan. Bhutto's alliance with the MQM, while putting the PPP over the top in the national elections, proved an obstacle when it came to parliamentary action.

Furthermore, her alliance with the rival political bloc weakened her credibility within the PPP (though it never threatened her leadership of the party), especially among the Sindhi Nationalists who had been among her strongest supporters. The MQM, at one stage, even approached the army chief to intervene in Karachi which meant that the PPP in Sindh had become one-sided or was incapable of containing violence. The MQM was also demanding repatriation of 250,000 Urdu speaking Biharis living in camps in Bangladesh since 1971 and who were often referred to as stranded Pakistanis. Islamabad was reluctant in bringing them to Pakistan, fearing a backlash from the Sindhi population, as most of these Biharis already lived in Urban-Sindh and their new arrivals might simply inflate existing ethnic tensions.

The Pakka Qila incident which occurred on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1990 widened the tension. The Pakka Qila is a Muhajir settlement in Hyderabad where, according to the sources of PPP government, some terrorists had taken refuge. The government, therefore, tried to smoke them out and launched armed action against them with the result that at least 30 people were killed and Altaf Hussain accused Benazir Bhutto of backstabbing. Such recriminations only hastened secret negotiations between the MQM and Nawaz Sharif as Benazir Bhutto was seen as a common foe. On September 18, 1989, MQM formally aligned itself with the IJI which had grown into a bigger alliance called the Combined Opposition Parties (COP) determined to bring down the PPP regime. Benazir Bhutto survived the vote but did not make any substantial effort to redirect her energies in building bridges with her political opponents and, thus, national politics remained fragile. The second major mistake, on the part of Benazir Bhutto, was by keeping the chief ministers of Punjab and Balochistan out of the decision making at the centre. Only chief ministers of Sind and NWFP were invited to attend cabinet meetings. Similarly, the provincial governments of Punjab and Balochistan and the district councils in these provinces were bypassed in implementing the Peoples Works Programme through parallel machinery, mostly under the district heads of the PPP (Kalia, 2001).

## **Estranged Relationship between Prime Minister and President**

The president by the powers acquired under the Eighth Amendment got a superior position. In this changed

scenario, Ghulam Ishaq Khan revised his views on the use of presidential powers. Rising to the top position in the country after having served as a bureaucrat, finance minister, and Chairman of the Senate, Ghulam Ishaq Khan came to view that the country's future as closely entwined with his own. He took strong positions on several issues including Afghanistan's foreign policy and Pakistan's nuclear program. Equally important, he insisted that the prime minister should inform him of all decisions that do not necessarily fall under presidential jurisdiction, an encroachment of prime ministerial powers that was resented to by Benazir's government which received 323 memos during twenty months on wide-ranging issues (The Herald, January 1993). The President also showed reluctance in signing the ordinances declaring that an elected government should pass the laws through the legislature.

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan began a confrontational relationship with Benazir Bhutto. For example, he extended the tenure of Iftikhar Ahmad Sirohey as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee when Benazir called for his retirement. Secondly, he refused to appoint her nominees for the Supreme Court, notwithstanding the fact that in a parliamentary democracy the president is required to issue appointment orders on the advice of the prime minister. The president presumably wanted to convey the message that he is more powerful. The relationship turned so tense between the President and the Bhutto government that some PPP leaders anticipated presidential dissolution of the National Assembly long before it actually happened in August 1990 (Yasmeen, 1994).

The differences between Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Benazir Bhutto further increased in 1989 on the question of whom to appoint the Chief Justice of Pakistan and the Chief Election Commissioner. The President held the view that the Constitution has granted him the power of appointment of the Chief Justice, and also other judges in consultation with the later. However, Benazir argued that the President would be bound to accept the recommendations of the elected premier. The President decided for filing a reference in the Supreme Court so that the issue could be resolved. However, the issue got resolved when the prime minister consented to the appointment of Mohammad Afzal Zullah as Chief Justice on December 9, 1989. Similarly, Benazir also agreed to the insistence of the President that Justice Naem Uddin Ahmed would continue as the Chief Election Commissioner.

The President was committed to supporting Nawaz Sharif, the head of IJI, for whose success he had worked secretly in 1988 elections. The president-prime minister showdown over the Admiral Sirohey affairs was the logical outgrowth of an enduring war of nerve which, sooner or later, had to come into the open. The uneasy relationship had been sustained without an open rupture because neither of the two was in a position to secure an outright victory against the other (Mahmud, 1992).

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan justifying his decision of dissolving the National Assembly and provincial administrations blamed Benazir for the worst governance and no control over the law and order situation. Benazir Bhutto's government, he said, was burdened by nepotism and torn by corrupt practices. According to the President, the country needed new leadership to set things right and he called on the leader of the opposition, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, to form a caretaker government until new elections could be conducted. Pakistan's Constitution, especially Zia's Eighth Amendment, remained intact, however, and it was the President's extraordinary powers under this clause as well as that cited in Article 58(2)(b) that provided Ghulam Ishaq Khan with the authority to terminate Benazir's rule.

## **Setback to Democracy in Benazir's First Term**

Benazir Bhutto's assumption of office brought great expectations from inside as well as outside of Pakistan. In her first address to the nation, she pledged to work for a progressive and democratic Pakistan, one guided by Islamic principles of brotherhood, equality, and tolerance. At the same time, she invoked Quaid-i-Azam's vision for a Pakistan that would grow as a modern state. Benazir rhetoric soared, promising much to an expectant nation, strengthened relations with the United States, the Soviet Union and China, protect minority rights, increased provincial autonomy, imparting education, introduction of a comprehensive national health policy, enhanced rights for women with equal pay for equal work, and the like. She promised

to raise the existing 30% literacy rate to 90.5% within 5 years and would expand the infrastructure of secondary and tertiary education ([Giunchi, 2011](#)). During the election campaign, she voiced her concern for women's social and health issues including the issue of discrimination against women. She also announced her plan to establish women's police stations, courts and women's development banks. Despite these plans, Bhutto did not propose any legislation to improve welfare services for women. During election campaign, she promised to repeal controversial laws such as Hudood and Zina Ordinances that curtailed the rights of women in Pakistan but her party did not fulfill these promises due to immense pressure from the opposition.

The first few months of 1989 were marked as in-active months for Benazir's government to work. Benazir had done everything she could that did not cost money: freeing prisoners, lifting the ban on unions, permitting freedom of the press. Yet she was unable to come up with funding for any new program. The weakness of her governance was laid bare by its inability to bring forward any meaningful legislation during twenty months. Indeed Pakistan's experience in 1988-90 lends weight to those understandings which maintained that democratic transitions unilaterally imposed by armed forces were at best likely to result in fragile democracies. No doubt, it eschews the improvement in economic equity while maintaining guarantees of political freedom to some extent, but these are more likely to produce a hybrid mix of elected government and authoritarianism ([Talbot, 2009](#)). In 1990, the position of Benazir Bhutto weakened because of its disappointing political performances. It was haunted by the fear that the ruling coalition might collapse, that the government spent most of its energies on sustaining its partner's support through political compromises, material rewards and corruption. Political freedom increased during this period but the Benazir government was unable to adopt policies of long term socio-economic transformations ([Rizvi, 1998](#)).

Benazir Bhutto's term as prime minister ended as it had begun amid political battles and intrigues. The coalition she had forged with the MQM to form her government, broke up when she failed to carry out its promises with party. As a result, Benazir lost her majority in the National Assembly and was unable to pass any legislation. Not all of the country's problems were political; rather the weak economic position of the country had remained a matter of concern for her government. Pakistan went into an economic decline during her first term. In addition, the oil boom in the Persian Gulf countries had ended and Pakistanis could no longer go there for high paying jobs that allowed them to send money home. Business was bad and there were fewer jobs available. Amidst high inflation and deepening unemployment, demands came from the private sector that she could not address. ([Ziring, 2003](#)). Furthermore, the appointment of her mother, Nusrat Bhutto as a senior minister without a portfolio, followed by the selection of her father-in-law, Hakim Ali Zardari as chairman of the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee was viewed, in some quarters as ill-advised nepotism. Benazir's government also set up the controversial Placement Bureau which made political appointments to the civil bureaucracy, although the bureau was later abolished. She let the political legacy of her family intrude, for example, when the capable public servants who had earlier harboured disagreements with her father, were dismissed for reasons other than job performance. In addition, the failure of the PPP to share power and spoils with its coalition partners caused further alienation, including the withdrawal of the MQM from the government in October 1989 ([Interview of the research scholar with Begum Naseem Wali Khan, 09-10-2015](#))

## **Conclusion**

The government of Benazir Bhutto lasted for only twenty months after the use of the undemocratic provision of the Eighth Amendment by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan. Her lack of experience for such a high echelon of powers as Prime Minister vis-à-vis the combined, strong and hostile opposition and the military and powerful presidency did not allow her to contribute in resolving the governance issues of the country during this transitional period. None of the group was sincere in the real sense to let the PPP government complete its mandated tenure. The democratic governance needs political harmony,



understanding and broadmindedness which could not gain grounds due to the frequent interruption by the vested interest. A responsible behaviour of the political leaders, their morale and commitments are those crucial elements that can strengthen democratic institutions. But unfortunately, all these measures were not entertained by Benazir's first-term government. Benazir Bhutto lacked sufficient authority to do, otherwise, she was supposed to create a more tolerant environment which might have been conducive for the propagation of democratic norms that let her been allowed to exist longer. It is interesting to note that the opposition leaders tried hard to challenge the legitimacy of a civilian government based on the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution made by Gen. Zia ul Haq who came to power through illegal means. When faced with the hard realities of government, however, most of Benazir's rhetoric did not translate into real actions for democratic consolidation. Although, she launched a democratization mission in Pakistani politics yet, but she became a victim of governance issues which resulted in the dismissal of her government. No doubt, it was a military-backed decision and the higher judiciary as expected from the previous experiences, had also sided with the powerful President.

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